President’s Report

The SPVS presidency is one of those roles where just when your term is ending you begin to feel almost competent! As President you attend meetings and events, give opinions, issue press-releases and engage with people in places and positions that you probably would not have otherwise have done so and I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to represent the Society at all these events.

This has been an exciting year for SPVS with the launch of several new initiatives including the inaugural Leadership Academy, aimed at supporting delegates in becoming more confident business managers and leaders - a matter after my own heart! This proved to be very successful and we are planning to run it again in a new and improved format in 2018. A new forum was introduced where members can chat and share resources easily. I have also been closely involved with the “Investors in Graduates” initiative which has included groundwork for the launch of GradTrack in 2018. This is a SPVS-VDS Graduate Academy for graduate employees working in independent veterinary practices which will be complemented by a SPVS-VDS mentoring initiative which aims to help employers mentor new graduates.

2017 was a year of positive change for the Society with the appointment of an Executive Director, Nichola Watson. This could not have been a better move for the Society with Nichola embracing the role and energising Council to look to the future. Nichola’s appointment triggered Council to look at SPVS governance and in December Council voted in favour of structural change. A proposal will be brought to members at the 2018 SPVS AGM that Council is reduced from its current 24 person two-tiered structure, to a single-tiered board structure of 12 people. This will result in a saving of both time and money which can be reinvested into maintaining and developing SPVS member services.

Finally I would like to say a big thank you to my fellow officers, as well as the SPVS secretariat, Claire, Sally and Sarah, who are an invaluable source of guidance and knowledge about how SPVS really works. I also wish Peter Brown, SPVS President in 2018, the best of luck during his presidency.

Brian Faulkner, SPVS President

SPVS/VPMA Congress

Over 550 delegates enjoyed 5 streams of excellent lectures and entertainment at The Celtic Manor Resort near Newport including streams in New to Management, New to Ownership, Taking charge: future of the veterinary professions, Managing client expectations around cremation and disposal and Scaling up: managing a larger team. Over 400 guests attended the Oscars themed banquet and partied the night away to the ever popular Bogus Brothers. Thank you to all our sponsors, particularly our platinum sponsors, Merial and Citation.

Practice Life

Practice Life continues to be a well appreciated member benefit and looks in depth at challenges affecting the owners and managers in the profession. Contributors this year have been lively and diverse, and it has also provided an excellent forum to feed back on and promote our CPD offering. Our Executive Director, Nichola Watson now has a column; the regular RCVS and BVNA news sections keep our members up to date with their news too. The collaboration with VPMA is working well as is the relationship with Mojo. The magazine remains a small net cost to the Society after advertising revenue is accounted for. The editors always welcome ideas for content and “Hot Topics” for future editions.
**SPVS Wellbeing Awards**

Following on from the inaugural Awards in 2016, the 2017 award had 33% more entries and the judges were impressed with the quality and range of initiatives from those practices who entered. The winners will be announced at the opening ceremony of Congress.

With the help of Elinor O’Connor from the Manchester Business School, the 2017 award asked practices to tell us what they are doing in their practices under 7 headings covering such things as an individual’s control at work, personal development and effective communication, which have been shown to have a direct effect on the wellbeing of the team at work.

Our winners demonstrated outstanding examples of these and how they have benefitted the wellbeing of their team. We will publish examples after Congress.

One of the purposes of the awards is to bring attention to the importance of developing and maintaining a positive culture in the practice and promoting the wellbeing of our teams. To help we have successfully launched a web site, and Facebook and Twitter pages where discussions and ideas can be posted to share good practice.

Please have a look and get ready to enter your practice next year!

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**Lancaster**

2017 marked the 30th anniversary of the Lancaster Student Seminar (although the original event was held in Reading!) and to celebrate the occasion past delegates, speakers and supporters joined students, guests and Council members at the eighties themed Gala Dinner.

Students once again gave the event tremendous feedback proving the need for advice about life after uni and the chance to network with ‘old hands’ – here’s to the next 30 years!

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**Networking Golf Day**

The Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons held the 2017 Golf Day for the President’s Putter on 13th June at the Forest of Arden Marriot golf complex in Warwickshire. The day, which was sponsored by Keith Dickinson of Shire and Phil Swan and Mark Beaney of Hazlewoods, was attended by nearly 50 vets from across the country and, as usual, a great day was had by all.

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**Snowscene**

Snowscene 2017 was held in Arc 2000, at the 5* Taj-I Mah hotel. A total of 38 delegates, speakers and guests attended. A stormy start to the week produced some excellent fresh powder snow and this combined with the excellent non-clinical CPD provided by James Cronin of Eightlegal (Employment Law & HR Support for vets) and Dan Clay from Clay & Associates Ltd (Tax specialists) made for yet another memorable Snowscene.

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Benchmarking and Surveys

In 2017 SPVS published its Fees Survey, the first to be launched on the new online platform, and the Salaries Survey is due to report shortly. We hope this will provide a convenient medium for members to submit their data and view results. Meanwhile the Profitability Survey continues to gather data and has been used to develop our CPD programme as well as report to the veterinary press. SPVS continues to work with Veterinary Insights on the VetViewer benchmarking service, and further developments are planned for 2018.

SPVS/VPMA Regional CPD and Focus Days

We ran 14 regional CPD events plus 2 Focus Days in 2017 and the ‘New to Management’ course which ran as a stand alone CPD event at Congress 2017. Over 400 hundred delegates attended and the events were all well received. The inaugural Focus on Practice Finance day was enjoyed by over 70 delegates and the enthusiasm for the day means that we will be repeating the format in 2018.

In addition to the Focus Day we will be running 18 CPD days in 2018. Starting at Congress with two courses available as stand alone CPD days, New to Management and Ownership Options, our courses will be run throughout the year and across the country offering a wide range of topics and speakers; some new, some favourites repeated.

We would like to thank our headline sponsor, Bayer, for their support and also Royal Canin.

Consultations and working groups

SPVS was invited to contribute to the RCVS Telemedicine consultation this year and our response reflected views taken from the email discussion list and from the current Council members. We are still awaiting the outcome of this consultation. We have also positively contributed to BVA’s call for action for real evidence to recruitment issues by conducting a survey in September.

The results of this have given hard facts to the Migratory Advisory Committee strongly supporting the lobbying to put Vets back on the Shortage Occupation List. SPVS has also, through our nursing liaison, supported and contributed to the Review of Schedule 3 and the future of Veterinary Nursing consultation. SPVS supported the fact that nurses are under-utilised and would welcome the development and enhancement of the RVN role with additional training where appropriate.

VetXML

There have been no major developments this year but SPVS is continuing to work with the Vet XML Consortium to improve electronic communication across the veterinary industry, in particular we are working on an electronic clinical history transfer project. We are expecting to have further significant developments in 2018 to tell you about.
New Forum

This new service will provide members with a place to network, problem-solve and help and support one another in an easily accessible, safe environment. It is intended as a compliment to the existing email discussion list and will provide members with the facility to easily search for topics, access useful SPVS information and up or download documents.

Membership

Membership has fallen slightly, although there were more new members (217) in 2017 than 2016. The majority of those resigning were either retiring, had sold their practices or were recent graduates.

Financial Report Year-Ending September 2017

SPVS’ finances are in a healthy state as we review the last financial year, with an increased surplus compared to the previous year, allowing us to continue to invest in member services.

A very successful Congress and CPD programme has increased our income stream and, overall, total expenses have decreased.

Meeting expenses have increased 14.3%. The apparent reduction in the President’s expenses is due to a variance in the timing of expenses’ claims and will be reflected in next year’s accounts.

Our Executive Director’s expenses are now showing in the accounts.

General expenditure has dropped largely due to decreased survey costs. The set up costs of the new surveys platform last year was a one-off cost and won’t be repeated.

Sue Jennings, SPVS Treasurer

Executive Director

What a whirlwind it has been as SPVS new Exec Director. It’s been great getting to understand the organisation, meet members, build relationships with Council and Officers and most importantly look at how SPVS can further support its members.

I’m looking forward to taking SPVS forward into 2018 with exciting new initiatives and building on current and new member benefits. The implementation of our electronic surveys, interactive web based forum, continued comprehensive CPD, new graduate support and leadership programmes are but a few of the reasons to enjoy your continued membership of SPVS. Thank you to all who have supported the integration of this role, and assisted me in getting started.

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